

A
DISCOURSE
OF
CHRIST

As He is a

Rock of Salvation.

CONTAINING

Some Sermons, Preached at the
Merchants Lecture in *Broad-Street.*

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Minister of the Gospel.

L O N D O N:

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TO THE
READER.

THE Truths that are handled in the following Treatise must be acknowledged to be of the greatest Weight by all them who profess the Belief of Scripture-Revelation. Sinners may fear the extremity of all Misery, if they be not led to Christ and at Peace with G O D. Real Believers can have no Comfort till they know that they have Christ for their Refuge, and that G O D is not their Enemy but their Friend. Whether the Discourse be managed so, as to have a conduciveness to Promote the welfare of Immortal Souls, I leave others to Judge. It was composed for a religious
As-

The Preface.

Assembly, and what was delivered in the Pulpit com's now from the Press without any material Addition or Alteration. It is upon this account that discerning and unprejudic'd Persons, will make allowances for the plainness of Style that runs through it. A very small share of Literature will furnish a Man with a Talent to amuse the generality of Hearers with unprofitable obscuritys, and to raise in them a stupid Admiration of what they do not know or understand: But for any one to speak of the deep mysterious Truths of the Gospel in such a way as not to be a Barbarian to the Weak, is a great Difficulty, and he that sincerely sets himself to do it, shall have the Testimony of a good Conscience, when he loses the miserable Reward of
Mans

The Preface.

Man's Applause and Adulation.

I must crave the Candid and Favorable Interpretation of all Christians concerning this undertaking: But I Beg the Patronage of none, but only of him who is Prince of the Kings of the Earth, who was dead but now is alive, and Lives for evermore. Rev. 1. 5, 18. If I can do Christ the least Service by the Publication of this small Tract, and if it may be useful either to awaken Sinners who live without God in the World, or for the encouragment of them who are seeking a heavenly Country, I have my End, and shall rejoice.

January 30.

1709.

Richard Taylor.

The Problem

It is a problem of the first importance to the world, and one which has been the subject of much discussion and debate. The problem is not only a matter of fact, but also a matter of principle. It is a problem which has been the subject of much discussion and debate, and one which has been the subject of much discussion and debate.

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Richard Taylor

CHRIST

A SURE

Refuge,

AND A

ROCK of Salvation.

PSALM LXI. ii.

*-----Lead me to the ROCK
that is Higher than I.*

WHEN we are Weak and
ready to Fall, the Sense
which we have of our Im-
potency, must put us upon seeking
Strength: When we are pursued by
Enemies, the Fear which we are un-
der of falling into their hands,
must

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Christ a sure Refuge,

must drive us unto our *Hiding-place*; and when we are about to *sink*, we must then look to that *Rock* which can uphold us.

I T was the *Sense* which the *Psal-mist* had of his *Danger*, and the *Care* which he had of his *Preservation*, that made him breath out his *Request* to *GOD*, to *lead him to the Rock* which was *higher than he*.

T H I S *Psal-m*, as the *Title* of it shews, was to be sung on *string-ed Instruments*, which were to be play'd on with the hand, *Isa. 38. 20. Hab. 3. 19.* It was Fram'd and Composed by *David* when he was under difficult *Exercises* and *Trials*. It was from the end of the *Earth*, or from the place of his *Banishment*, and when his heart was overwhelmed within him, that he pray'd to *GOD* to lead him to the *Rock* that was higher than he. *Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.* It is as if he had said, 'Lord, lead me to that *Rock*, to which, without thy help, 'I cannot come, and where I shall 'be safe when I have got to it.

T H A T

THAT in the Text which needs Explication, is to shew of whom the *Rock* here mentioned is to be understood. It must be understood of the Mystical Rock *Christ Jesus*. I shall offer Two Reasons for this.

1. It is under the Similitude of a *Rock* that *Christ* is represented, and set forth to us in the Scriptures. None but such as are very ignorant of the Scriptures will deny this.

2. MAN in his Fallen State cannot either have any friendly and familiar converse with GOD, or receive any *Covenant-Relief* from him, but as he is in *Christ*. It is not now with GOD as he is a Creator and Lawgiver, but only as he stands in the *Fæderal Relation* of a reconciled and pacified GOD, that a Sinner can have *Union* and *Fellowship*.

If the *Psalmist* did not intend by the *Rock* the promised *Messias* only, yet he must mean by it, GOD, as he is a *Redeemer thro' Christ* *. GOD is not only infinitely above us in the Glory of his

* *Ego saepe & libenter hoc inculco ut extra Christum oculos & aures claudatis & dicatis nullum vos scire Deum, nisi qui fuit in gremio Mariæ & suxit ubera ejus, Luther on Psalm 130.*

Christ a sure Refuge,

Majesty as we are *Creatures*, but his infinite Holiness renders him every way contrary to us as we are *Sinners*; and therefore as we are *Sinners*, we can have no Encouragement to come to *GOD*, without a previous knowledge of his being infinitely Merciful, and ready to receive us in *Christ*. *GOD* is *our Rock*, but it is in *Christ* that he is so. By the *Rock* in the Text I shall understand *Christ*; and I hope herein I do not offer the least Violence to the true natural and genuine sense of the Words. The Doctrine which I shall raise from the Words is this:

IT is unto Christ, as he is a Rock, that we must desire to be led.

In speaking to this Doctrine I shall do Three things:

I. I shall shew, Why we must desire to be led to the *Rock Christ Jesus*.

II. I shall shew who it is that must lead us to *Christ* as he is a *Rock*.

III. I shall make Application of the Doctrinal Truth.

I. I

I. I shall shew, Why we must desire to be led to *the Rock Christ Jesus*. I shall lay down Four Considerations, or enforcing Reasons, which may move us to desire this.

I. We must get into the Rock *Reason I.*
 Christ Jesus that we may get a saving and a spiritual *Sight or Knowledge* of GOD. It was in the *hole of the Rock* that *Moses* stood when he saw the Back-Parts of GOD. *Exod. 33. 22, 23.* the Rock wherein *Moses* stood was a Figure or Type of the promised *Messiah*; this is what both Ancient and Modern Writers will allow, and which some of the most Considerable *Hebrew* Doctors will not deny. The Name of GOD which *Moses* heard proclaimed, do's evince that the true *Messias* was prefigured and typified by the *Rock*. *Exod. 34. 6, 7.* The name which *Moses* heard proclaimed is that which Christ came to manifest and declare. *John 17. 6. I have (saith Christ) manifested thy Name.* What Name? I Answer. That Name which GOD proclaimed when he passed by *Moses* standing in the hole of the Rock. *The Lord God, merciful and*
 B 3 *gracious;*

Christ a sure Refuge,

gracious, long suffering, abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin. This is the Name of GOD which Moses heard proclaimed, and it has a fragrancy, and superlative sweetness in it to *revive* us when we are even ready to be struck *Dead* under the loud and terrible Thunders of the *Law*. We must get into the *Rock* that we may hear the Name of GOD proclaimed, which is a sweet Oyntment poured out, and that we may get a saving and spiritual Sight of God.

1. IT is in Christ that we get such a Sight of God as elevates and raises up our Hearts to a believing dependence on him. When we see GOD in Christ upon a Throne of Grace, with his Face full of affectionate Smiles, and with his Arms open to Embrace us, this is a Sight of him that excites us to a *fiduciary* Reliance on him. When we are in the *Rock*, or when we look to it, we then get such a glimpse of the Glory of God, as draws up our Hearts from Earth to Heaven, and Unites them to heavenly things.

2. IT

2. IT is in *Christ* that we get a Sight of GOD that renders GOD altogether *lovely* and *comfortable*. When we are without the Knowledge of Christ, and estranged from him, there is then nothing appears in the Face of GOD, but Terror, and we can see nothing in our Selves but Darkness and Dispair. It is in Christ that we may see GOD laying the Foundation of our Happiness, whereon Mercy will be built up for ever. It is in *Christ* that we may get a Sight of God's *Fulness*, when we have a sence of *our own Emptiness*.

3. IT is in *Christ* that we get a Sight of GOD that changes us into his *Image*, and restores his likeness in us. 2 Cor. 3. 18. *When we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord we are then changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the spirit of the Lord.*

WHEN we are Ignorant of Christ, we may by the Exercise and Improvement of Reason, know that there is a GOD, and we may know him in the Unity of his Essence and in several of his Attributes and Perfections: But

Christ a sure Refuge,

all the Knowledge that we have of
 ✓ GOD while we are out of Christ,
 leaves us in our Unbelief, it Admini-
 sters no Comfort to us, and it makes
 no Change upon our Hearts. When
 Men come under the Convictions of
 Sin, so as to be troubled for it, and
 are not lead to Christ, they can then
 see GOD no otherwise than with a
 flaming Sword in his Hand, lifting
 up a Standard, preparing the Wea-
 pons of Death, drawing forth his
 Bow of Steel, and ready to carry them
 away as with a Tempest. What can
 this work and beget in them but *Fear*
 and *Despair*?

Reason 2. 2. IT is in the *Rock Christ Jesus*
 that we may find a Shadow to Cover
 and Refresh us, *Isa. 32. 2. A man*
shall be as an hiding place from the Wind,
and a covert from the Tempest: as Ri-
vers of Water in a dry place, as the
shadow of a great Rock in a weary
Land,

IT would be a great injury to the
 Truth, as well as a Reproach to the
 Evangelical Prophet, if we should
 imagine that he rose no higher in his
 thoughts

thoughts about the Man that he here Describes, than the Person of *Hezekiah* or some other earthly Prince. It was Christ that he had in his Eye, and he sets him out under such Significant Allusions as must render him most Precious to them that have felt the Burden and Weight of Sin.

1. HE is said to be a hiding place from the Wind. Christ is the same to the Soul, that a place of Shelter is to the Body, from the violence and injury of Wind and Weather.

2. HE is a Covert from the Tempest, or from a Storm wherein there is both Wind and Rain.

3. HE is as Rivers of Water in a dry place. He is more refreshing to Sinners, than a Spring of Water is to a thirsty Traveler in a dry Desert.

4. HE is as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land. A weary Land is a Land wherein Men are ready to Faint for Heat and Drought. The Shadow of a Rock is exceeding grateful to Faint and Weary Persons.

I, IT

1. IT is the *coolest Shadow*, and so gives the greatest Refreshment to them who are almost spent with the extremity of Heat.

2. IT is a *permanent Shadow*. It is more durable then the Shadow of a Cloud which brings down the *Heat in a dry place*. *Isa. 25. 5.* the Shadow of a Cloud is fleeting and not fix'd; but the Shadow of a Rock is abiding. It is under the elegant, and apt Similitude of the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land, that we are led to know what the Covering and Refreshment is which Sinners may find in Christ. When the Conscience of Sinners is wounded under the sense of Guilt, when their Sins are set in Battel Array against them, and stand before them in their *black* and *tremendous* Aggravations, when the Law demands from them a perfect Obedience, and because of their deficiency herein, passes a condemning Sentence upon them, which they in themselves cannot keep off or avoid, and when the Fire of God's Justice begins to burn against them, it is not then to be express'd in Words how great their Distress is.
If

If they look within they find there a guilty Conscience to upbraid them. If they look into the Law, they do there see a charge drawn up against them which they can never answer. If they look upwards they may see a powerful incensed GOD ready to punish them for the many Thousands of their Transgressions. If they look down-wards they may there see a Tophet of Wrath prepared for the wicked, and for such as they must acknowledge themselves to be. All this can't but fill them with the greatest Anguish and Trouble. When Sinners are ready to be burnt up with the Fire and Heat of GOD's Justice, what is it that gives them Relief, and proves to be a Security to them? I Answer, It is the Shadow of Christ wherewith they are not only covered, but refresh'd. It may be said, How comes Christ to be this Shadow? I Answer, It is by the Assumption of our Nature, and by what he did for us in our Nature, that he comes to be a Shadow to us.

FOR the full answering of this, I must lay down Three things.

I. CHRIST

1. CHRIST as the second Person in the Trinity assumed our Nature, and was God and Man in one Person, that as Man he might have a Nature wherein to suffer, and that as GOD he might have a Nature wherein to satisfy for Sin, and to render his Obedience of infinite Value. He was equal to God, the Person offended. *Phil. 2. 6, 7. When he was in the form of a Servant, and made in the likeness of Men he thought it no robbery to be equal to God,* because it was his natural and inseparable Right and Due to be so. Because Christ was Equal to GOD the Merit of his Obedience became Infinite, and the Vertue of it is Eternal.

2. CHRIST in our Nature, and as the Surety of Sinners, fulfill'd the whole Law. He fulfill'd the Preceptive Part of the Law. Again, he underwent the Penal Part of it in its utmost Severity; he bore the Wrath of GOD, and was not broken by it. That which Christ bore would have broke the Backs of all the Angels. The Wrath of God is so heavy, that when it falls upon Angels or Men, it crushes

crushes them, and hurles them into Destruction: but Christ was not broken by the Wrath of God when it lay upon him. *Isa. 42. 4. he shall not fail, nor be discouraged, or broken.* This was the Promise of God to Christ. When the Wrath of God without Mixture, falls upon any of the Creatures, they must then groan under it to Eternity, and will never get from under it: but Christ bore it, and overcame it by his own Power, because he was *the strong God. Acts 2. 24. it was not possible that he should be held by the pains of death.* The Pains of Death were from the Wrath of God which would have held fast the strongest Creatures from ever rising from under them, and if Christ had not been G O D as well as M A N they would have held him. It was because he was G O D that it was not possible for him to be held by the Pains or Bands of Death. He broke the Bands of Death asunder and swallowed up Death in Victory. The Obedience of Christ to the Preceptive and Penal Part of the Law was so Full, and the Dignity of his Person put such a Worth into it, that it purchased not only the Redemption of Sinners

Sinners from the greatest Misery, but a Right and Title for them to all the Glory of Heaven. GOD has such large thoughts of Love to Sinners that they are without Bounds and Dimensions, and yet the Obedience of Christ is of equal extent to all the Gracious Purposes of GOD's Heart. It Merits whatever GOD intended to give, and therefore it not only Redeems us from Eternal Death, but purchases the Heavenly Inheritance for us. *Rom. 5. 17. For if by one Man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of Righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.*

3. THE Obedience or Righteousness of Christ, considered as a Surety, is imputed to Sinners. When Christ knew no Sin, yet it was laid upon him, and he was punished for it, that they that had committed it might be pardoned. Christ became Sin by imputation, when there was no Inherent Spot or Defilement in him, that they who had no Righteousness of their own might be Justified by a Righteousness imputed which is Superiour

perious to the Righteousness of the Angels in Heaven. As not *the Effects* of Sin, but Sin it self, in its Guilt, was imputed to Christ, because if he had not been Criminal by Imputation he could not have been justly punished : So it is not *the Effects* of Christ's Righteousness, but the very Righteousness of Christ *it self* that is imputed to us, and it is the only Righteousness for which we are justified before GOD.

THE Righteousness of Christ, as it is imputed to us is this Shadow, and it is that which Hides and Covers us from the Fire of GOD's Eternal Wrath.

WHEN we were deservedly the Marks of all the Arrows of GOD's Eternal Vengeance, and when the Terrors of the Almighty were marching against us, then Christ chang'd States with us, suffered the Pains of Hell, bore the Wrath of God, took our Sins upon him to answer for them, and gave us his Righteousness that it might be our Shadow and Covering from the Fire of GOD's Indignation.
Oh!

Oh Sinner! When thou hast once got under the Shadow of Christ, how great is thy Happiness! Thou mayst then look upon GOD as he is *a consuming Fire*, and yet call him thy GOD in Covenant, and expect from him *a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.* Heb. 12. 28, 29. Thou mayest walk in the Fire and not be burnt, because thou hast the Shadow of Christ to Screen and Cover thee: To speak in the Words of the Church, *Canticles 2. 3. Thou mayest sit down under the Shadow of Christ with great delight, and the fruit of his Cross will be sweet to thy tast.*

Reason 3.

3. IT is from the Rock Christ Jesus that the Water of Life flows out to quench our Thirst. It was out of the Rock that Water did Run for the People of *Israel* to Drink. *Exod. 17. 6. Numb, 2. 11.* The Rock out of which Water did come for *Israel* to Drink in the Wilderneys was typical of Christ. *1 Cor. 10. 4. They did all drink the same spiritual Drink, (for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.)*

THEY

THEY did all (saith the Apostle) *drink the same Spiritual Drink.* viz. Water out of the Rock, which is call'd Spiritual Drink, because it was Symbolical or Sacramental, and represented that to their Faith, which was not Evident to their Sense. They did all drink of the same Spiritual Drink, but they did not all do it Spiritually. They had not all a Spiritual Frame when they drank of the Water out of the Rock, and they did not all understand its Spiritual Reference and Signification. When the Rock was Smitten, Water did then Run out of it; so when Christ was Smitten of God the Water of Life did then Flow from Him. *He was stricken and Smitten of God, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him and to put him to grief.* Isa. 53. 4, 10. When he was the only begotten Son of GOD, and when GOD lov'd him with the Love of a Father, yet he punished him that he might Vindicate his broken Law and do Right to his injured Holiness. When Christ stood in our Stead, he felt the Strokes of GOD's Wrath. Why did GOD Strike and Smite Christ? I Answer, That out
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Christ a sure Refuge,

of him might Flow the Water of Life, whereof if we Drink we shall Thirst no more. *John 4. 14. Whosoever (saith Christ) drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.* When any one has drunk of this Water, it may then be said of him in different Respects that he do's Thirst, and he do's not Thirst. He has a Thirst of *Complacency*, but not a thirst of *Total Indigency*.

I. A *complacential Thirst* after Christ is increased in a Believer. He cannot but Thirst for more of Christ
 Δ till he come to Drink at the full Fountain. He that do's not Thirst for more of the Water of Life, never drank of it. Every Ray of Divine Light encreases in us Desires after a Clearer and more unclouded Vision. When we are come to the *dawning* of the Day, we Long for the *Day-light*, when we have the Day-light, we wish for the *Rising-Sun*, and when that appears, we are not satisfied till we see it in its *Meridian Lustre*. As it is in the Knowledge which we have of Christ, so it is in the Taste that we have of the Water of Life.

The

The more we drink of it, the more our Thirst is raised 'till we come to *drink of the Rivers of Pleasure that are at the Right Hand of God for evermore.* Psal. 16. 11. This is a Blessed Thirst, and they that have it shall be fill'd. When the Desires of unregenerate Men are craving and reaching after the sordid and trifling Things of this World, Believers are then thirsting after things that are of infinite Consequence, even the Great and Glorious things of Christ, wherewith the very Heart of God was fill'd from Eternity.

2. WHEN a *Believer* drinks of the Water of Life that flow's out from Christ, then, *his Thirst of Total Indigency is quenched.* When Men are out of Christ they know nothing but Wants, because their Lusts are always much larger then their present Enjoyments. When their Desires are unreasonable they are also boundless, for *they enlarge their desires as Hell.* Hab. 2. 4. The Desires of the Soul cannot be confined within a narrow Compass, but they exceed all Bounds, and Limits, and Pursue not only
C 2 what

what is known and seen, but also what Men find wanting in the things they Enjoy. In the highest Fruition of worldly Things there is dissatisfaction, and Vexation, because of the insufficiency, and emptiness of all things here. The World may afford a sort of imaginary Contentment to them that are brutified in their Tempers and Dispositions: But it cannot Administer true Satisfaction to any one who is not wholly divested of the Exercise of his Reason. The desires which Sinners have after the things which they want in the World are endless, and so many Desires as they have, so many Idols they Erect to themselves, and every new Idol that they set up, proves a Spring of new Sorrows. They that do not believe in Christ can have no real Satisfaction any where; They intangle themselves in many Difficulties and fill their Souls with endless Disturbances and Distractions. They are always in want, and their indigency becom's their Trouble and Torment: But when a believing Sinner drinks of the Water of Life that comes from Christ, he is then satisfied, and he Thirsts no more.

Altho

Altho he Thirsts for more of Christ; yet he do's not Thirst for any thing that is out of Christ, because there is not any good thing that he can Thirst for but it is in Christ. When the World is gone, and Fails him, when all Friends forsake him, and when the Verdure of the Creature is withered and blasted, then a Well-spring of Life, and Cristal Streams flow out of the *Rock* to delight his Soul. The Rock not only affords him Water to drink, but *pours him out Rivers of Oil.* Job 29. 6. When we come to the Fountain of living Water that is in *Christ*, then our Thirst is quenched, and all our Desires are so far satisfied that we rest contented in what we have, and in what we shall have hereafter. We cannot desire any thing for the Spiritual Being of our Grace, or for our Eternal well-being in *Glo-ry*, but we have it in *Christ*, because, *it has pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,* Col. 1. 19. When any one has drunk of the Water of Life, he has then no Reason to Complain of Emptine's, he may be Poor, and may have nothing in this World, and yet he possesses all things, because

Christ a sure Refuge,

in having Christ he has all things. We may say of him as it was said of one of the Twelve Tribes, *Deut. 33. 23. O! Naphtali satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord.*

Reason 4. 4. IT is the Rock Christ Jesus that is our Strength and our Foundation.

I. HE is our Strength.

II. HE is our Foundation.

I. Christ is our Strength, and he is so, for our *Defence* and for our *Security*.

I. HE is our *Strength* for our *Defence* against all Enemies and invading Evils. We must lay hold of this Rock and go out against Sin, Satan, and all our other Enemies in the strength of it. The less we trust in our Selves, and the more we trust in this *Rock*, the stronger we shall be. It is Christ that gives us the Victory over the body of death that we carry about with us, or the strength of Sin in our own Hearts. Rom. 7. 24, 25. Again, It is Christ that pull's down the ensigns of the Devils Empire, and Destroys his Power.

Power. Rom. 16. 20. When GOD breaks the Devils Head, and bruises him under our Feet, he do's it as he is a GOD of Peace, and it is only in Christ that he is a GOD of Peace to us. Again, It is Christ that can give us Peace in the midst of the greatest Trouble, and he can give us Peace or Deliverance from Trouble. Mica. 5. 5. *This Man shall be the Peace when the Assyrian shall come into the Land.*

2. HE is our Strength for our Security, or to preserve that which we commit to him. 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know in whom I have believed or trusted, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day.* Every Believer trusts Christ with his soul and the Salvation of it. The Salvation of his Soul is that which is his greatest concernment. If his Soul be lost, then all is lost: But if his Soul be safe, then all is safe. When a Believer trusts Christ with his Soul, he trusts him with all he has, and Christ will take care of that which he intrusts him with, and put's into his Hands. Christ never breaks his Word, or betray's
C 4 his

Christ a sure Refuge,

his Trust, because he is True and Faithful, and he never Fails to save the Souls that are committed to him, because he is Omnipotent. As he is the Faithful GOD he will fulfil his Word. And as he is the Almighty GOD, he will save all the Souls that are left to his Conduct. It is Christ that gives us Life, and that can Maintain us in the Possession of it. John 17. 2. Thou hast (saith Christ speaking of himself to GOD the Father) given him Power over all Flesh, that he should give Eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him. Eternal Life is infinite Happiness, and this is given and secured to us by the infinite Power and Strength of Christ.

2. CHRIST is our Foundation to Support and bear us up under all Weights and Pressures.

1. CHRIST is our only Foundation. I Cor. 3. 11. *For other Foundation can no Man lay, than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ.* Mistaken and Deceived Sinners lay many other Foundations, but they can lay no other Foundation that will hold, or stand.

2. HE

2. HE is a sure Foundation. *Isa.*
 28. 16. I lay in Zion (says
 GOD) for a Foundation, a Stone, a
 tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a
 sure Foundation, he that believes shall
 not make haste. Christ was a Founda-
 tion lay'd in the Eternal Decree of
 GOD, and when the fulness of
 Time was come, the Decree was ex-
 ecuted, and then he was a Foundation
 lay'd in Zion. When he is a precious
 corner Stone to Cement and Knit to-
 gether the two Walls of the *Jews* and
Gentiles, he is also a sure Foundation
 to Support and Uphold the whole Fa-
 brick and Building of the Church.
 Christ is a sure Foundation, and there-
 fore, *he that believes shall not make haste.*
 He that Rests his Soul upon Christ
 shall not in his Straits and Distresses,
 be like Men at their Wits-end, who
 Run backwards and forwards, and
 Embrace indirect Means to Extricate
 themselves out of Danger: but he
 shall in the Hope and Expectation of
 a good and succesful Issue, with great
 Tranquility of Mind, depend upon
 Christ for the performance of all his
 Promises. Christ is a *tried Stone* and
 a *sure Foundation*, and none that are
 built

Christ a sure Refuge,
 built upon him shall ever be ashamed
 of their Hope.

3. HE is a strong Foundation, and can Support us under the greatest Weights and Burdens. Sin when it is felt, is a great Weight. The Reason why Men do not cry out of Sin, is not because they are without the Weight of Guilt, but because they are without Life, and have no sense of their Burden. They that are dead in Sin do not feel the Weight of Sin. It is with them as it is with a Man that is dead and without a Natural Life, if we could roll a Mountain of Lead upon his Back, he would not Feel or Groan under its Weight. It is even so with them that have the Guilt of a multitude of Sin's lying upon them, and yet are insensible of their Burden. Why are they without a sense of it? I Answer, Because they are without Life. When a Man has any degree of Spiritual Life, then Sin becom's the heaviest Burden to him in this World. *Psal. 38. 4. Mine iniquities (says David) are gone over mine Head as an heavy Burden, they are too heavy for me.* All the Creatures in Heaven and
 Earth

Earth cannot bear up the Heart of a Man when he is pressed down under the Guilt of Sin. If all the Angels in Heaven did unite their Strength together and did imploy it all to support one Sinner that is sensible under the Burden of his Guilt it would not be sufficient to bear him up, but he would sink into a Gulph of Dispair. If a Sinner be left to stand under the Weight of his Sin, it soon becomes a Burden insupportable: But when he com's to the Rock Christ Jesus, when he trusts in him and relies upon him, he is then bore up altho he have the Weight of innumerable Sins lying upon him. Before he comes to the Rock one Sin is enough to sink him into Hell: But when he com's to it all his Sins put together, if they be more then Man's Arithmetick can reckon up, cannot press him down or hinder him from rising up as high as Heaven.

4. HE is an everlasting Foundation, *Isa. 26. 4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength; or the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of Ages.* The short

short Span of Time will bring all other Foundations to Ruin, but Christ is a Foundation that will stand throughout the endless Ages of Eternity. *Prov. 10. 25. The righteous is an everlasting Foundation,* We may better Read it thus, *the Righteous have an everlasting Foundation,* The Righteous have a Foundation that will continue the same for ever.

5. HE is a Foundation that can't be shaken or moved. He is a Rock that the most violent Storms can't overturn and when the deep and swelling Waters are ready to go over our Heads they cannot over-flow our Spiritual Rock, because he is higher than we. Christ is a Rock that infallibly secures the standing of them that are built upon him. *Mat. 7. 24, 25. whosoever hear's these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise Man which built his house upon a Rock: And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not, because it was founded on a Rock.* The Words that I have Read, and the two next Verses are the Epilogue of
Christ's

Christ's first Sermon. he divides his hearers into two Companies.

1. INTO them that build upon the Rock, and they are compared to a *Wise builder*.

2. INTO them that build upon the Sand, and they are likened to a *Foolish builder*.

WHEN a Sinner believes in Christ, and when he Sticks and Cleaves to Christ in the Promise, he is then like a Wise Man that builds his House upon a Rock. When sore Afflictions and outward Calamities, like Showers of Rain, are poured down upon him, when the Floods of Persecution with a Swift and Violent Torrent beat against him, and when the Wind's of Satans Temptations blow upon him, yet he Fall's not. He may fear falling and may think that he is but held by a weak Twig from falling into Destruction, but fall he do's not, and cannot. It may be said, Why? I Answer, Not because he hold's the Rock, but because the Rock hold's him. The Rock that

that he stands upon can never be overturned or sink under him, and the Rock holds him so fast that he must stand while the Rock Stands. A Believer and his Rock are distinguished, but they are Mystically one, and shall never be divided. If we suppose that all the external Afflictions in the World did come upon a Believer, if all the Persecutors on Earth should have nothing to do but to Torment him, and if all the Powers of Hell were let loose to Tempt him, yet they would not be able to destroy his Faith, and to separate him from the Rock whereon he is built. This is not from a Believers Faith, because Faith considered in it self as it is a Creature might fail : But it is from the Power of Christ which is engaged to keep alive a Believers Faith. The Power of all the Creatures is but a finite and a limited Power, but the Power of Christ that secures the standing of a Believer is Infinite and Almighty. The Devil and all other Enemies cannot destroy a Believer, unless they could pull down and break to pieces the Rock whereon his Faith is built. A Believer may Slip and Halt, but he can-

cannot fall irrecoverably into a lost State; because he is united to Christ, and is fixed upon a Rock that is impregnable against all Assaults. When he has got upon the Rock he is then secured from the Floods, as well as covered from the Wind and the Rain. The Gates of Hell, or all the Power and Policy of Hell cannot prevail against him.

OH! That I could deeply Affect my self as well as you with what I am now going to say which is this. There is a Flood coming which will be more dreadful then that which drown'd the Old World, because it will not be a Flood of Water but a Flood of Infinite Wrath, and it will be a Flood without any bottom or end. There is but one Rock whereon we can stand and escape this Flood, even the Rock Christ Jesus. If we be not in him the Flood will Sweep us away, and we must Eternally sink into the bottomless depth of GOD's Displeasure. We are for ever safe if by Faith we be built upon the Rock: But we are never out of Danger, and we shall unavoidably Perish if we be not. If
this

this be so, then there is nothing that we ought to Desire more than to have the Rock for our Foundation, and there is nothing that we ought to fear more then a State of Distance from him.

2. I shall shew who it is that must lead us to Christ as he is a Rock. In doing this I shall speak to two things.

1. *WE cannot go of our Selves to Christ till we be led.*

2. *IT is GOD that must lead us to Christ.*

1. WE cannot go of our Selves to Christ till we be led, because of our Impotency and because of our Obstnacy.

1. WE are of our selves Impotent and *cannot* go.

2. WE are of our selves Obstinate and *will* not go.

1. WE are of our selves Impotent and cannot go to Christ if we be not led.

1. A Sinner has no Natural Power to believe in Christ, he lies as a dead Branch till G O D Graft him into the true Vine, for it is he only that is able to Graft him in. *Rom. 11. 23.*

TWO Men may sit under the hearing of the same Word and he that has the weakest Intellectuals may go away a Believer, and may pass from Death to Life, when the other who is of stronger Parts is hardened in his Unbelief. Why is it so? I Answer, Because G O D leads the one to Christ when he leaves the other in his Sins. When a Sinner is raised up to a lively Hope, as it is a product of abounding and overflowing Mercy, so it is the Fruit of Christ's Resurrection. *1 Pet. 1. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (saith the Apostle) which according to his abundant Mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is a Work of Infinite Power, as well as of Infinite Mercy, to raise a Sinner from the Dead, and to bring him to believe in Christ.*

2. WE are of our selves Obstinate, and will not go to Christ if we be not led. *John 5. 40. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.* There is such a strong Aversion and Prejudice in the Hearts of Sinners against Christ that when they are left to themselves under the Convictions of Sin they chuse rather to despair than to believe in him. It is because of a rooted Prejudice that Sinners have against Christ that he becom's to them a Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offence. *1 Pet. 2. 7, 8. unto them which be disobedient, he is a stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence.* Unbelieving and Disobedient Sinners Stumble at Christ, and when he is the only Rock that can *save them*, he becom's to them, thro their own unbelief, a Rock of Offence. They Ship-wrack and Ruin their Souls, and Split upon him, like Mariners that run their Ships upon the Rocks. It may be said, How com's this Obstinacy and Enmity to be in the Hearts of Sinners against Christ that makes them altogether unwilling to come to him? I Answer, It is from three things.

I. IT

1. IT is from the Darkness that is upon the Minds of Sinners. They do not see the Glory and Excellency of Christ, and therefore they have Mean and Low Thoughts of him. There must not only be a Scripture Revelation of Christ, but there must be a Supernatural Work of the Spirit to enlighten the Understandings of Sinners to see and know Christ before they can believe in him. The external Revelation of the Word may be had in its compleat fulness, when yet the Minds of Sinners may be covered with Midnight Darkness; and so long as the Minds of Sinners are darkened they will lightly esteem the Rock Jesus. *Deut. 32. 15. he did forsake God that made him and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation.*

2. IT is from the Hatred that Sinners have against the Purity and Holiness of Christ's ways. It is the denial of sinful Self that offends Sinners against Christ. They are as unwilling to part with their Lusts, as the Dumb and Deaf Devil was to go out of the poor Mans Son, that he had long possessed. *Mark 9. 20, 26. Sinners are*

so desperately set upon their Lusts, and Captivated by them, that they will rather venture to be bound in Chains for ever, than to deny themselves for a few Hour's here, they will rather forfeit the Life to come, and *Damn* their Souls to Eternity, than Mortifie their Corruptions. Any one Lust that Rules in the Heart of a Man, will separate between Christ and him. It was the love of the World that parted the young Man and Christ. *Mat.* 19. 21, 22. He had a mind to have been doing something in Religion, but when Christ Struck at his Lust of Covetousness he went away sorrowful, for he had great Possessions. When Sinners are given up to the Lust of Covetousness, they will not then lay aside their purposes of viewing their Farms, and proving their Yokes of Oxen, to come to Christ. When they are addicted to Pleasure, they will then Peremptorily Reject Christ, rather than deny themselves as to their Voluptuousnes. *Luke* 14. 18, 19, 20. When Sinners walk according to the will of the Flesh, and follow their unbridled Appetites, they do not then consider that the Transitory Pleasures of this Life will

will never be a Recompence for the Torment of a perpetual stinging Conscience, and the Misery of a burning Lake of unquenchable Fire.

3. IT is the denial of Righteous Self that proves the greatest Obstacle of all to Sinners in coming to Christ.

THIS was the *break-neck* of the Jews. Rom. 9. 32. they stumbl'd at Christ, and he was as a stumbling Stone to them. Why? I Answer, Because they sought not Righteousness by Faith, but *as it were* by the Works of the Law. There are some Impressions of a Covenant of Works left in the Hearts of all Men, and therefore it is agreeable to the Sentiments of their Natural Conscience to have Recourse to GOD in their distress: But there is a strong and inflexible Enmity in their Spirits against Christ, and it is *that* which turns them away from him. GOD considered as he is the Creator of all things, as he is the Avenger of Evil, and as he is the Rewarder of them that do well, has a Testimony in the Natural Conscience of Sinners, and therefore

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when

when they are convinced of their Wretched and Woful State, and are brought under the Sense of Guilt, they then betake themselves to duties, and tremble before GOD as he is the Punisher of Sin. Natural Conscience tells them that GOD is the Person offended, and he must be satisfied, that he is angry, and he must be appeased, and that it is against him that they have sinned, and none but he can remit the Punishment which is due to Sin. Natural Conscience will excite Men to do this, and yet at the same time it will oppose their coming to Christ, because Conscience puts them upon seeking Life and Salvation by a Covenant of Works and encourages them to stick to their own Righteousness. To go to Christ and to believe in him is contrary to the way of Nature, and to all the Operations of a Natural Conscience; and it is contrary to the Pride of Man's a Heart, because when we believe in Christ we must go out of our selves, and off from all we do, and must expect all from Christ. This does so cross the Stream of Nature, that there is nothing does more forcibly obstruct the coming of Sinners

ners to Christ, than a leaning and cleaving to their own Righteousness. When the House is swept from the gross part of Sin, and is garnished with the superficial Paint, and Varnish of Morality and self Righteousness, yet after all this is done, if it be empty of Christ, the Devil's Empire in its greatest Strength will be established there. *Mat. 12. 44, 45.* When Men settle upon the Lees of a Moral Reformation, and go no farther, there is then a greater Reason to fear the irrecoverable loss of them when they have a confident Opinion of their own Worth, than there is of the greatest and worst of Sinners. Some Publicans and Harlots Repented and Believed in Christ, and so entered into the Kingdom of Heaven, when the Pharisees that trusted to their own Works were shut out. *Mat. 21. 32.* It was not only the followers of *Epicurus* but the *Stoick Philosophers* that were greater Enemies to the Gospel than others. *Acts. 17. 18.* It may be said, why were the *Stoicks*, who were reputed the most Vertuous of all Heathen Philosophers, such stiff Opposers of the Preaching of the Gospel?

I Answer, They asserted that a Man's Happiness was from *something in himself*, and therefore they could not digest the Doctrine of the Gospel, because it took them off from their self Sufficiency, and struck at their darling Opinion, which plac'd the Happiness of a Man in the *Vertue of his Mind*. It is easier to reduce Sinners to Moral Vertue, or the external part of Obedience, than to *Faith in Christ*, and therefore they are greater Enemies to the Gospel than they are to the Law. It it be asked why? I Answer, It is because the Gospel call's upon them to deny their own Righteousness. The Law acknowledges a Man to have a Righteousness of his own, and it speak's to him as being under a Covenant of Works: But the Gospel teaches a believing Dependence and Reliance on Christ, and the absolute denial of Self-Righteousness. Again, the Law put's a Man upon trusting to his own Power: But the Gospel brings him to despair of his own Strength. Again, The Law encourages him to Act for his own Reward: But the Gospel strips him of all his own worth and put's him upon expecting

ting and receiving all from GOD thro' Christ, not only as a Gift but as a Free Gift, or as that which is freely given.

2. IT is GOD that must lead us to Christ. It is he only that can lead Sinners to the Rock Christ Jesus. *Joh. 6. 44, 45. No Man can come unto me except the Father which has sent me draw him. Every Man that has heard and learned of the Father com's unto me.* It is by the light of the Word and Spirit that GOD shews Sinners how all their Righteousness and Strength is in Christ, and it is by the Power of his Spirit that he leads them unto him. It was a directive Motion from GOD that brought all the Creatures that were preserved from the Flood into the Ark with *Noah. Gen. 7. 8, 9.* It may be call'd a supernatural Instinct that guides Sinners, when they are led unto Christ. It is not a blind Enthusiastick Motion, because a Man that is led by it has the highest Reason for what he do's, and he has the most Necessary End for what he do's, even the Eternal Salvation of his Soul: But when he is led

led unto Christ, he then Acts above the Power and all the Principles of Reason. When a Sinner is led unto Christ, it is GOD that turns his Heart and brings him to Rest on Christ. To believe in Christ is most difficult when GOD leaves us to our Selves, because then all that is within us rises up against Christ: But it is easie to believe when GOD leads us to Christ, because when GOD leads a Sinner to Christ, he can have no Ease, Quiet or Satisfaction in his Spirit till he come to him, and when he is come he hangs upon him. The power of GOD holds him fast to the Rock Christ *Jesus*, and he cannot be beaten off from the Rock.

IT may be said, When is it that we are led by GOD to Christ? To this I shall Answer in Three Things.

I. WHEN GOD by his Word and Spirit has led a Sinner to Christ, the Sinner is then encouraged and imboldened to come unto the Father by the Son for a gracious Acceptance, and to be declared Righteous in the Sight of GOD upon the Account
of

of Christ's Righteousness. *John 14. 6. No Man com's unto the Father (says Christ) but by me.* It is in the other place that was mentioned before, *No Man can come unto me except the Father draw him. viz. No Man can believe in me, or Apprehend me and my Righteousness till the Father first draw him.* It is here, *no Man can come unto the Father but by me. viz. No Man can approach or draw nigh to GOD as he is a just Judge, to be acquitted absolved and justified before him, but only by me, and by relying on my Righteousness as I am the surety of Sinners.* Altho we have here a seeming Inconsistency, yet we have no Contradiction, but the glorious Mystery of our Redemption expressed in few Words, which is this, **GOD** the Father leads Sinners to Christ, and when he has led them to Christ, Christ then receives them, puts the Beauty of his own Righteousness upon them, hides all their Blemishes, covers all their Spots and Defilements, and presents them as acceptable and as faultless before **GOD** the Father that they may have his Favour and Good Will for ever.

2. WHEN

2. WHEN GOD has led us unto Christ, we can then live upon him by Faith. *Gal. 2. 20. the life (says the Apostle) which I now live in the Flesh is by the Faith of the Son of God who lov'd me and gave himself for me.* To live by the Faith of the Son of GOD is not only to live a Life of Mortification and Self-denial as to all Sin: But it is to live upon Christ as our Righteousness, and as the Spring of all Grace, and of every Vital Motion. It is to live upon Christ *as he is made of God unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. 1 Cor. 1. 30.* This is to live upon him as he is our Wisdom, to guide us in our return to GOD, as he is our Righteousness to Justifie us, as he is a Spirit of Life to quicken and Sanctifie us, and as he is our Redemption to deliver us from Bondage and Misery.

3. WHEN GOD has led us unto Christ we then trust in him as our only, and as our surest Defence. We then say with *Hannah. 1 Sam. 2. 2. There is no Rock like our God.* There is none like him for Truth and Faithfulness, for Power and Strength, and there-

therefore he is deservedly the only
Ground of our Confidence. *Phil. 3. 3.*
We are the Circumcision which worship
God in the Spirit; and rejoyce in Christ
Jesus, and have no confidence in the
Flesh. It is as if he had said thus,
' Whatever the *Jews* out of Envy, Spite,
' Malice, Contention and Sullenness
' Clamour against us, and report falsely
' of us, we are they whose Souls are re-
' newed and sanctified by the Spirit,
' and we are made capable to offer up
' to G O D the Internal Adoration and
' Devotion of our Hearts. We are
' they who rejoyce in Christ Jesus, but
' have no Confidence in the Flesh.
' When we take a view of the Merits
' of Christ, and can believeth at he shed
' his Blood for us, we have then the
' greatest cause to rejoyce, but we do
' not, and we dare not in the least trust
' to our selves, or in our own Strength,
' Graces and Duties, but we look to
' Christ and to him alone for Justifica-
' tion and Life. True Believers expect
no Justification but by Christ's Righ-
teousness, and no Sanctification but
by his Spirit.

IF it be so, that ye have come to **GOD** the Father by Christ for Acceptance, if ye live by Faith in Christ, and if *he* be the only ground of your Confidence, then ye are such as **GOD** has led unto Christ.

3. I shall make Application of the Doctrinal Truth. There are none of you here but are either such as are not yet led to Christ, or such as are led to *him*, and therefore I shall apply the Truth to both sorts among you.

1. IF ye be such as were never yet led to the Rock Christ Jesus, it will then appear from what has been said, that your Condition is very Miserable.

1. WHEN ye are not led to Christ ye can have no saving Knowledge of **GOD** but are ignorant of him, and they that *know* not **GOD** as well as *they* that are *disobedient* are *punished with everlasting Destruction*. 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.

2. WHEN ye are not led to Christ ye have then nothing to cover you

you from the consuming Fire of GOD's Infinite Wrath, and whatever slight thoughts ye may now have of the *Anger* of GOD, yet when it comes to fall upon you, ye shall find it to be too great for you to bear, and too sharp for you to endure.

3. WHEN ye are not led to Christ, ye can have nothing but present Trouble, and the Prospect of Future *Pain* and *Despair*. As Sin is your Deformity, so it is your Trouble here, and it will be your Torment hereafter.

4. WHEN ye are not led to Christ ye are without a Foundation, and must sink into the Pit of Destruction. All this is True concerning you, and when ye hear it, ye are either insensible of it, and do not believe it, or ye have some sense of it.

1. IF ye be insensible of it, and do not believe it, we can then only warn you of your Danger, Pray for you, and with Commiseration to your perishing Souls, cry out and say, Oh! That you did but know in this your day

day the things of your peace before they be hid from your Eyes.

2. IF you be sensible of your Misery while ye are without Christ, and if ye have any desires to be led unto him, then I shall lay down Three Directions which will be for your everlasting Safety and Comfort if ye follow them.

1. **P R A Y** to **G O D** to lead you to the Rock that is higher then you, for he is only able to lead you to it. Take Shame to your selves because of your Sins, bewail your forlorn and helpless Condition, cast your selves down at the Foot of God, implore his Mercy, and entreat him to put forth his Power to lead you to Christ, that thro Christ ye may have leave to come to **G O D** as a reconciled Father.

2. **W H E N** ye are brought seriously to Consider what way ye must take to escape the Wrath to come, do not run to false Refuges, and do not build upon sandy Foundations. There are two false and sandy Foundations that prove the Ruin of Sinners.

R. A

1. A presumptuous Expectation of Mercy without looking to Christ. The Prophane build upon this, they would have Mercy but they would have it without Christ.

2. SELF-Righteousness is another false Foundation. The *Pharisees* or Legal Professors build upon *this*. It is harder to beat Men off from *this* than from the Former. The two aforesaid Foundations, and all other false Foundations that are laid by Self-deceiving Sinners will be overturned by the Storm of GOD's Anger, and overflow'd by the Flood of his Wrath. It may be said of all false Foundations as it was said of the Foundation or false Hope which the Old drunken ungodly World had to bear them up in their Security and Presumption. *Job 22. 16. Their Foundation was overflown with a Flood.* The Foundation of Presumption and Self-Righteousness are Foundations that will not stand, but will be overflowed with a Flood. When GOD lays Judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, the hail will then sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall
E over-

overflow the hiding-place. Isa. 28. 17. The time is coming, and it will soon come, when GOD will proceed with every one of you according to the strictness of the Moral Law. *He will lay Judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.* He will deal with you according to the Sentence and Judgment of the Law which is *Immutable* as to the Death either of a *Surety* or of the *Sinner*. If ye be not found in the Righteousness of a Surety which answers all the demands of the Law, then the Sentence of the Law must be for ever executed upon you. If you fall under the Severity of the Law, then all your presumptuous Expectations of Mercy, and the Confidence ye have in your own Righteousness, will be but Refuges of Lies. They will not prove to be either what was promised or presumed, they will but be as a House built upon the loose Sand which the *bail* will either throw down, or which the *Flood* will carry away.

BE careful about the Foundation ye lay. If it be not Christ it will then be such a Foundation as has Deceit

ceit for its beginning, and will have Destruction for its end.

3. WHEN ye are brought to see your own Weakness and Insufficiency then take hold of Christ who is the Strength of GOD. As he is the Wisdom of GOD, because the great Design of our Salvation was contrived and Fram'd in him: So he is the Power of GOD because our Salvation is effected by him. *Isa. 27. 5. Let him take hold of my strength that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* It is as if GOD had said, 'if he takes hold of my Strength 'he shall not loose his Labour, but he 'shall make Peace with me and a Peace 'that shall never be broken altho the 'sense of it may for a time be lost. If thou dost provoke the Power of GOD by thy Obstinate Infidelity thou shalt then feel his Wrath: but if thou dost take hold of it thou shalt have the love of his Heart. If thou dost stubbornly Rebel against GOD, and set thy self to resist his Power, he will then break thee with a Rod of Iron: but if thou dost cast thy self upon the Power of GOD as it is in Christ, he will

affectionately clasp thee in the Arms of his Infinite Mercy. If thou dost oppose the Strength of GOD, he will destroy thee, and none will be able to deliver thee out of his Hands: but if thou dost take hold of the Strength of GOD, altho with the Hand of a *feeble* and *trembling* Faith, thou shalt be saved and shalt live for ever.

IF there be any of you whose desires are towards Christ, and whose Souls are reaching out after him, be encouraged to take hold of him, and then ye shall make Peace with GOD, and your *Peace* shall be as a *River*, and your Prosperity as the *Waves* of the *Sea*. If ye flee for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope that is set before you, ye have then two immutable things, *viz.* The Promise, and the Oath of GOD to Confirm the Promise, to put Life into your Faith, and to Administer to you strong Consolation, *Heb.* 6. 18.

2. THE Doctrinal Truth may be applied to such of you as GOD has led to Christ, and who have embrac'd the Rock for your Shelter.

I. IN

1. IN every new Trouble and Distress ye must run to Christ, and ye must seek rest no where but in him. Ye must say as *David* did. *Psal. 55. 6. Oh that I had wings like a Dove! for then would I flie away and be at rest.* When we have either trouble from *without*, or trouble from *within*, we must (when GOD has given us the wings of a Dove) flee to Christ.

1. WHEN we have trouble from without we must flee to Christ. When we are greatly troubled because of the perplexing Uncertainties, the shattering and overturning Revolutions, and the rowling *Mutations* that are in this World, then we must flee to Christ. Tribulation is that which we must expect in the World, but it is in Christ that we may find Peace. *John 16. 33.* When a day of trouble comes upon us the Lord will be our strong Hold. *Nab. 1. 7. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knows them that trust in him.* He knows their Weaknesses to Pitty them, their Straits to relieve them, their Wants to supply them, and he knows them with a firm unchangeable Eternal and

Infinite Love, and therefore, he will either preserve them from trouble or save them in it.

2. WHEN we have trouble from within we must flee to Christ. When our Hearts are sore pain'd within us, and when the Terrors not only of Temporal but of Eternal Death fall upon us, we must run to Christ. The *wings of a Dove* signifie a *Swift* and a *Resolute* Motion. Our flight must be swift, and therefore it must not be deferred. It must be a resolute Motion, and therefore it must not be stopp'd by any Impediments and Discouragements. When we dread the Curse of a violated Law, when we fear the Powerful Wrath of a terrible offended GOD, when we feel the Guilt of our aggravated Sins, when we are wounded by the fiery Darts of Satan, and when we are thrown upon the Rack of a self accusing and condemning Conscience, we must then flee to Christ with Speed and Resolution. When we seek a hiding Place in the Clefts of the Rock we shall then hear most Gracious and Comfortable Words from GOD.

Solomons

Solomons Song 2. 14. O my Dove that art in the clefts of the Rock, and in the secret of of the stairs, let me see thy Countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy Countenance is comly. The Rock is Christ, and the Clefts of the Rock are the Wounds and Death of Christ. He is not only a Rock ; but as he is a wounded, bleeding, bruised, crucified Christ, he is a Rock with Clefts, and it is in the Clefts of this Rock that tempted and deserted Believers, who are like Fearful and Faint-hearted Doves, may find a Covering from the overflowing Scourge. When we have fled to the Clefts of the Rock that we may be purified by Christ's Blood, healed by his Wound's, Justified by his Righteousness, and quickened by his Death, we are then not only hid from every Storm and Tempest, but our Countenance, which is altogether black in it self, is made comely in the Sight of GOD, because of the Beauty which Christ casts upon us ; and our broken distracted and disjointed Prayers are as sweet Melody to GOD, because they are presented to him with the Perfume of Christ's Merits, and in the

Power and Strength of his Advocacy and Intercession. When we have got into the Clefts of the Rock, we may look towards GOD with Faith and Hope, because Christ gives us a comely Countenance, and we may offer up our Requests to him without servile Fear, because our Voice is Sweet unto him, and he Loves to hear it. When Believers of a tender, humble, contrite Spirit are mourning over their Sins, Charging and Condemning themselves for their Transgressions, pleading the Vertue of Christ's Blood for Remission and Forgiveness, and hiding themselves in the Clefts of the Rock, then their Voice is sweet unto GOD.

WHEN we either see the Clouds gathering thick and black from without, or when we have puzzling Conflicts from within, let us then breath out our fervent, earnest, importunate Prayers and Supplications to GOD for the *Wings* of a *Dove* that we may flee away from the hurry, Distraction, and confused Croud of this ensnaring and troublesome World, and from the ramps and pul-backs of our own unbelieving

believing Hearts, that we may hide our selves in the Clefts of the Rock. We must embrace Christ as our best Refuge in our good days, and as our only Sanctuary and Defence in the worst times.

2. IF GOD has led you to the Rock Christ Jesus, then ye must act Faith daily on him, that thereby your Faith may be further strengthened. Faith is invigorated by the repeated Acts of it. The more it is acted on Christ, the stronger it grows. *Psal. 62. 2. He only is my Rock and my Salvation: He is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.* To be moved was that which he now expected, but to be greatly moved was that which he did not fear. In the sixth Verse, he repeats the same Words, but puts forth a new act of Faith, and was then able to say, that *he should not be moved. He only is my Rock and my Salvation: he is my defence, I shall not be moved.* Here was a great Elevation of his Faith; he said before that he should not be greatly moved, but he was now got to such a height of Confidence that he could say, he should not be moved at all.

When

When ye have got hold of the Rock, ye must endeavour to take a faster hold of it. Ye must renew and multiply the Acts of your fiducial Dependence on Christ, and must do that day by day that ye did when ye were first converted to GOD and believed in Christ.

WHAT is it that a Sinner do's when he is first converted and believes in Christ? I Answer, He despairs of his own Strength, reckons his own Righteousness as filthy Rags, takes hold of Christ, stays his Soul upon him, runs to his Blood for cleansing, relies on his Satisfaction for the Pardon of his Sins, and the acceptance of his Person, and says he will have no other Saviour but Christ. He knows that he has daily slips, and new pollutions from which he must be washed, and therefore he has fresh recourse to the Blood of Christ, which is as a Fountain opened for the taking away of all Sin and uncleanness. *Zech. 13. 1.*

3, IF GOD has led you to the Rock Christ Jesus, then ye must be thankful for Christ and Rejoice in him.

him. *Psal. 40. 2, 3.* If ye can say with *David*, that *God has brought you out of a horrible Pit, out of the Miry clay, and set your feet upon a Rock*, ye must then celebrate the Praises of *GOD*. When ye cleave to the Rock of your Salvation ye must Rejoice more in him than in the whole World. There never was, and there never will be any Rock like unto your Rock, and therefore ye must begin your Song of Praise to Christ here, and ye must raise your thankful Strains higher and higher, that as ye approach nearer the borders of Eternity, ye may be more fit to join with the Heavenly Chorus or the Assembly of glorified Spirits whose Affections will always be on a Flame. Tremble with a holy Fear, because ye are so Weak and Sinful in yourselves: But rejoyce in Christ because in him ye shall be saved with an *everlasting Salvation*, and shall not be ashamed or confounded in that World which is without end.

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I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

Very respectfully,
J. H. [Signature]

THE
WAY
TO HAVE
PEACE
WITH
GOD.

Isaiah XXVII. V.

*Or let him take hold of my strength,
that he may make peace with
me, and he shall make peace
with me.*

IN the First Verse of this Chapter,
the Enemies of Christs Church are
threatened with severe and terrible
Judg-

Judgments. In that day the Lord with his sore great and strong Sword shall Punish Leviathan the piercing Serpent, even Leviathan that crooked Serpent. We must understand by *Leviathan* the Devil, and such Agents under him as are Furious and Vigorous Opposers of Christ and his People. The Devil is called *Leviathan*, and he is called the *piercing and crooked Serpent*.

1. *LEVIATHAN* which Signifies *Addition or Increase*, because the Devil loves to Increase and to Augment the Afflictions of GOD's People. GOD Afflicts in Measure: But when the Devil and wicked Men are permitted to strike, they do it without any Moderation.

2. THE Devil is called a *piercing and a crooked Serpent*. He is called a *piercing Serpent*, or a *Serpent crossing like a Bar*, because of his Strength. Again, He is called a *crooked Serpent* because of his Subtilty. The Devil and his Instruments are of great Strength and of deep Policy: But
GOD

GOD will destroy their Power, and will confound their Craft.

WHEN the Enemies of GOD are threatned with Destruction, his Children are comforted with a Promise of his Care for them, and of his Infinite Tenderness towards them.

ver. 2. 3. *In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* It may be said, if GOD keeps his Vineyard Night and Day lest any should hurt it, how then are his watchful Care and his paternal Compassions towards his People consistent with the grievous Calamities that often befall them? To this GOD Answers, That his severe Methods of chastning his People are not in Wrath.

ver. 4. *Fury is not in me.* GOD being essentially Holy, there is Wrath with him for Sturdy and Stubborn Sinners: But there is no fury in GOD towards his Children, when he afflicts he do's not hate them, and when he chastens he do's not forsake them.

GOD

GOD having prevented what might be objected of a seeming inconsistency between his love to his People, and the Afflictions which they come under, he proceeds to ask a Question. *Who would* (says he) *set the briers and thorns against me in battle?* viz. Who will be so Fool hardy and desperately Venturous as to stand against me, or to contend with me? By Briers and Thorns may be meant:

1. **ALL** the Enemies of the Church, the Stoutest and Strongest of them are but Briers and Thorns or as Fuel to feed the Fire of **GOD's** Indignation when he begins to March against them.

2. **ALL** the false Refuges to which Sinners out of Christ betake themselves for Security. Whether they be the shifts of their Sins, or the polluted Rags of their own Righteousness, they are but Briers and Thorns that the Fire of **GOD's** Wrath will utterly Burn and Consume. If all the Angels in Heaven with their united strength were to stand between **GOD** and

and our guilty Souls, they could not preserve us from being dash'd into Hell by the thunder of His powerful Anger.

WHEN GOD had told Sinners how they *could not* deal with him, he com's to shew them the *way* how they might amicably Treat with him, in the Words of the Text. — *Or let him take hold of my strength.* When it is said, *or let him take hold of my strength*, it is not to be understood as if GOD gave any Sinner a Freedom of Choice, either to set the Briers and Thorns against him, or to take hold of his Strength. GOD leaves no Sinner to a Point of indifferency in this matter: But he sets before him the unavoidable Danger of all his false ways that he might with a more *alluring* force Propose and Recommend to him the only way that is left for his Relief. If a Sinner oppose the strength of GOD, his Opposition will bring Destruction: But if he take hold of the strength of GOD, he shall find Safety and Eternal Tranquility. There are Three things in the Words.

The way to have

1. THE command which GOD lays upon a Sinner. *Let him take hold of my strength.* GOD alludes to a Man who perceiving another stronger than himself to be offended against him and ready to strike, lay's hold on his Arm in a *submissive* way that he may appease his Anger and keep off the blow.

2. THE end which a Sinner is to aim at, and to have in his Eye when he takes hold of the Strength of GOD. *That he may make Peace with me.*

3. THE Assurance which he has of making his Peace with GOD when he takes hold of his Strength. *He shall make Peace with me.*

The *Doctrine* which I shall raise from the words, is this.

IF we would have Peace with GOD we must then take hold of his Strength.

IN speaking to this *Doctrine* I shall do four Things.

1. I shall shew what the *Strength* of God is of which we must take hold.

2. I shall shew what it is to take hold of it.

3. I shall shew how we are said to make our Peace with GOD when we take hold of his Strength.

4. I shall make Application of the *Doctrinal Truth*.

1. I shall shew what the *Strength* of God is of which we must take hold. It is the Strength or Power of GOD, as it is acted in Christ for the Salvation of Sinners. Christ is called the *Power of God*. 1 Cor. 1. 24. *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. He is said to be the Wisdom of GOD because it is in him that GOD gives the highest Manifestation of his Wisdom, in that he takes occasion from the blackness and deformity of our Sins to make known the Glory and unsearchable Riches of his Grace. Again, He is call'd the Power of GOD, not because Almighty Power is a Property essential and inseparable to him

as he is G O D, but because he is intrusted with the Power of G O D as he stands in the Capacity or Relation of a Surety and Mediator. *All Power in Heaven and Earth is said to be committed to him.* Mat. 28. 18. All Power is committed to him for the Execution of his Office and for perfecting the Work which he came into the World to Finish. He has all Power to restrain the Devils, to over-rule the designs of wicked Men, to command the Angels, and he has *Power with God*, altho' not *over* G O D. Christ as he is our Surety and Mediator is the Power or Strength of G O D. Let us consider the Proofs that we have of Christ's being the Power of G O D as he is our Surety and Mediator.

I. HE gave demonstrative Evidences of his Almighty Power in the *lowest* Steps of his Humiliation. As his Humility did appear in the *highest* and most astonishing Miracles that he wrought, so the Glory of his Divine Power was conspicuous and did shine forth in the *Lowest* and *Meanest* things that were done by him. I shall give some brief Instances of this.

I. IT

1. IT was great Humility in Christ to be conceived: But it was great Power to be conceived by the Holy Ghost.

2. IT was great Humility to be Born: But it was great Power to be Born of a Virgin.

3. IT was great Humility to be Born in a Stable and to lie in a Manger: But it was great Power to bring the *Wise Men* from a remote Country, and *inwardly* to sway them to offer up a profound and yet a voluntary *Adoration* to him when he was altogether contemptible as to outward Appearance.

4. IT was great Humility to be tempted of the Devil: But it was great Power to overcome and confound the Tempter.

5. IT was great Humility to pay Tribute when it was not due: But it was great Power to make a Fish in the Sea his Treasurer to bring him a piece of Money for his present Expence,

6. IT was great Humility to Converse with Sinners : But it was great Power to draw the highest Reverence from the Angels.

7. IT was great Humility to be fastened to the Cross as a *Malefactor* : But it was great Power to cover the Sun with Darkness as with a Veil, to shake the Earth, and to make the Dead start up and rise out of their Graves.

2. CHRIST not only obeyed the Precept of the Law, but by his own Strength he bore and endured the Weight and Sharpness of GOD's Infinite Wrath when he suffered in our *stead*, and thereby *fulfill'd* the Law in the Penal part of it. He *trod the Wine-Press of God's Wrath alone*, and he could not have done this, if he had not been a *Mighty Redeemer*. *Isa, 63. 1, 3.* When he trod the Wine-Press alone without any helper he did it in the *greatness of his own Strength*, and as he was *Mighty to save*. He received the Arrows of GOD into his own Breast, and felt the sharpness of his Wrath when he bore the Burden of our Sins. GOD did *make to meet on him*

him, or laid on him the iniquities of us all. Isa. 53. 5, 6. When our iniquities were laid on him he had nothing to do with the *Filth* or Pollution of Sin, for he was *without Spot when he offered himself to God thro' the Eternal Spirit.* Heb. 9. 14. He had Sin no otherwise than by Imputation, but the Filth of Sin could not be Imputed to him, for it is a Contradiction in Terms to speak of the Imputation of Filth, because Filth where it is to be found is Inherent, and not imputed. Christ takes away the Filth of Sin by the washing of Regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost: But the Filth of Sin could not be laid on him.

CHRIST had not the Filth of Sin, but he had the Sins of the Elect laid on him *so far* as they could be his, by Imputation. Sin as a Debt, or Sin as a Violation of the Law was charged on him, and the Punishment which he underwent was the consequent Effect of this. He first took upon him our Sins, and then he *drank of the Brook that was in the way.* Psal. 110. 7. The breach of the Law was laid upon him, and then the Punishment deserv-

ed by this breach was inflicted on him, and therefore he is said to be *made a Curse for us*. Gal. 3. 13. If he had not come under the *Keiua* or Judgment of the Law for Sin imputed to him, he could not have been made a Curse, and it would have been Injustice to have *punished* him : But when our Sins were imputed to him as a Surety, then the Wrath of G O D in its *utmost* severity did fall on him. What strength must he have to stand up under all the Wrath of G O D, when a single *drop* of it is much more than any of us can bear?

WRATH of all things is most heavy, and when it lies and abides upon a Sinner it will Press him into a Gulph of Eternal Misery. The Apostate Angels sinned *once*, and for that *one* Sin came under the Wrath of G O D, but to this day they cannot throw off the Burden of it. They groan under it and must do so to Eternity. If the fallen Angels who were created with great Strength, cannot get rid of the Wrath of G O D which fell upon them for *one* single Sin ; what Power must Christ then have who stood under the weight of G O D's Wrath for a

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Numberless Number of Sins, or when the burden of all the Sins of the Elect World lay upon him?

3. CHRIST rose from the Dead and no Bands of Death could hold him. *Acts 2. 24. Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.* The Apostle Peter has reference to the Words of David. *Psal. 18. 5. The sorrows of Hell, or the cords of Hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.* what the Psalmist calls the Cords or Bands of Hell, is here said to be the pains of Death, because when Christ had a sense of the pains of Death, he was under the bands of it. The bands and pains of Death that he was under were from the Wrath of GOD falling upon him for our Sins. If it had been possible, the Bands and Pains of Death would have held and overwhelmed him: But because he had the Power of GOD it was not possible for him either to be held a Prisoner by the Bands of Death or to sink under the Pains of it.

TO restore life to a dead Body requires infinite Power: But in the Resurrection

urrection of Christ there was a greater difficulty than this to be surmounted, because when he was in the Grave he was not only Dead, but he lay under the Curse of the Law for our Sins. He had not a formal discharge as our Surety till he rose from the dead. As he was delivered for our Offences, so he rose again for our Justification. *Rom. 4. 25.* ¶ It was no ordinary Operation of Power that raised Christ from the Dead, but he was raised by the *excellency of the mightiness of God's Power.* *Eph. 1. 19, 20.* The Power of GOD in the *exceeding greatness of it wrought mightily in Christ when he raised him from the dead.*

4. CHRIST binds up the Arm of GOD from striking us for our multiplied Provocations, and it is no small Power that do's this. When we are call'd of GOD and come thro' Grace to partake of true unfeigned Holiness, we then find a *severe* hatred rising up in our Breasts against *all* Sin. It is this that makes us (if we be real Christians) long for the time when we shall be delivered from the very being of Sin in our selves, and when we shall no more be grieved and vexed with

with the *sight* of reigning *Lust* in others. If there spring up in us such a keen and sharpened Detestation of all Sin, when we come to have but some dusky and *obscure Characters* of the holiness of GOD imprinted on us, what then must be the hatred of GOD against Sin, who is *naturally, essentially* and *infinitely* Holy? It can be no less than an hatred of Sin that is Infinite. When the hatred of GOD against Sin is Infinite, it must be a mighty Power that keeps him from crushing us with his Wrath for the sinful and depraved Nature that we carry about with us, and for the thousands of actual Sins that we Commit against him. When GOD Pardons and passes by Sin, his Power in doing of it is great. When *Moses* pleaded with GOD to pass by the Sins of the *Israelites*, he argued from the greatness of GOD's Power. *Numb. 14. 17. I beseech thee* (saith he) *let the Power of my Lord be great.* To forgive Sin is not only a Work of Infinite Mercy, but of Infinite Power. It is for GOD not only to put forth a Power over the most refractory Creatures, and to remove the greatest Plague from

from them, but it is for him to put forth a Power over his own Holy Will, and to refrain and forbear that which his own pure Nature puts him upon doing. Who stops and restrains GOD when the Fire of his Jealousie is ready to burn against us, and when he is coming to break us in pieces for our Sins? I Answer, It is Christ, whom *God has made strong for himself.* Psal. 80. 17. It is he that holds GOD's Arm and puts the flaming Sword into the Sheath.

5. CHRIST brings a Sinner from under the Guilt of Sin, and Justifies him before GOD. He not only rowls away the Mountains of his Sins, and cast's them into the Depths of the Sea, but he makes him *more Righteous* than the Angels in Heaven are, when he is sinful in himself, and has no Righteousness of his own. It is a most amazing Power that is required to do this.

1. IT is a greater Work to Justifie a Sinner than it is to make a World. It is so for two Reasons.

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1. TO create a World is to give a Being to that which had no preceding Subsistence: But to Justifie a Sinner, is to give him a Righteousness, when he is not only *Nothing*, and *utterly Void of all Good*, but when he is full of *Enmity* and *Opposition* to the blessed G O D.

2. TO create a World is a good included within Limits: But the Justification of a Sinner may be said to be infinitely good as it Centers and Terminates in Infinite Glory.

2. IT is more to make a Sinner Just than it is to make a just Man eternally Happy, or it is a greater act of Power to Justifie a Sinner than it is to carry a justified Person to Heaven, because there is a *Relation* and *Connexion* between *Righteousness* and *Glory*, when there is not only the *widest* distance, but the greatest *Contradiction* between Sin and Righteousness. A State of Justification is so near a kin to a state of Glorification, that the Apostle when he reckons them up, speaks of them without putting any thing between them, because there is but a step for a
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Believer out of the one into the other. *Rom. 8. 30. Whom he justified them he also glorified.* When a Man is justified we may then say of him that he is *initially* and *fundamentally* Glorified, and he shall and he must be compleatly Glorified. When a justified Person com's to be actually Glorified, he then enters upon that State to which the Righteousness of Christ gave him a *legal* Claim and Title from the first Moment of his Justification. There is a strict and close tye between Justification and Glory: But when a Sinner is justified he is carried from one contrary to another. He is brought out of a state of Condemnation into a state of Favour and Acceptance with G O D.

6. CHRIST gives life to dead Sinners. He speakes life into dead Sinners. *John 5. 25. He makes the dead to hear his Voice, and they that hear do live. He gives life to the World. John 6. 33.* It is a stupendious Power that Christ exerts when he quickens dead Sinners. He rowls away the Stone that is upon the Grave of dead Souls, scatters the darkness of their Minds

Minds when it is as black as Hell, and softens their stony Hearts when they are harder than Steel.

IT is by a great Power that he makes the Foolish Wife, the Proud Humble, rebellious Sinners tractable and Obedient, sensual *Epicures* Heavenly Minded, and such as are Slaves to Divers Lusts, and sunk into the Mire and Mud of Voluptuousness, to delight in the severest parts of Mortification.

7. CHRIST preserves the Life of Grace where he has wrought it in the Souls of Men, and he brings it to Perfection. He Maintains it against the *violence* of Satans Temptations, and against all the *Counter-Workings* of indwelling Corruption. It is from Three things that the standing of a Believer is secured.

1. IT is from the Election of GOD, which is Eternal and Immutable. The Election of GOD is Eternal and Unchangable, and therefore it is not Possible to bring the Elect under any such *final Seduction* as cut's them off
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from Salvation. *Mat. 24. 24. The Election of GOD is a Foundation that stands sure. 2 Tim. 2. 19. It is so sure that nothing can shake or overturn it.*

2. IT is from the Death and Intercession of Christ. He died to Merit a *sufficiency* of Grace for all the Members of his Body, and he interceeds for the *seasonable* Communication of it to them in every time of Distress and Tryal. When the Faith of a Believer is ready to fail, Christ than *Prays that it fail not.* *Luke. 22. 32.* Christ Pray'd not only for *Peter*, but for every Believer that shall be here on Earth to the end of the World. *John 17. 20. Neither Pray I (saith he) for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me thro their Word.* If thou art one who believes on Christ thro the Word which is transmitted down to thee from the Apostles, then Christ did Pray as *effectually* for thee as he did for *Peter* or *John*, the beloved Disciple who lay in his Bosom.

3. IT is from the Power of Christ. *John 17. 2. thou hast given him power over*

over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. Christ has not only a Power over all them that are given him of GOD that he may bestow Eternal Life on them: But he has a Power over all Flesh, for the good of his Members. He has a Power over the Lusts and Corruptions, the Malice and Rage, the Enmity and Fury of Men and Devils in *subserviency* to the great End of giving Eternal Life to every Believer. When Believers are as weak, leaky and shattered Vessels, in the midst of Sands and Rocks, Christ then provides for their Safety that they may not split or break. All Believers are under Christ's Care, and it is by his Power that he will *deliver them from every evil work, and will preserve them unto his Heavenly Kingdom.*

2. I shall shew what it is to take hold of the strength of GOD. As the Strength of GOD of which we are commanded to take hold, is his Power as it is acted in Christ for our Salvation: So our taking hold of it is to take hold of GOD as he is in Christ. The *Popish Doctors*, define Faith to
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be no more than to *Believe or assent to the Truth of such things as are revealed by God.* *Becanus. Theo. sch. Tom. 3. cap. 8.* To teach that saving Faith rises no higher than such a Faith as this is, which is not only in the greatest Hereticks and Reprobates, but in the very *Devils*, is that which only becomes the *Papists* who are covered with a thick Cloud of *Darkness*, and whose Religion is such a Composition as has for its Principal *Ingredients* the *Doctrin's of Devils*, 1 Tim. 4. 1. 2, 3.

To believe in Christ, or to take hold of him, is not only to have a Notion of Christ in our Heads, but it is to trust in him with our whole Hearts, or it is to commit our selves to his keeping, from a Perswasion that our Souls are no where safe but in his Hands, and that he only is able to save us. 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, or whom I have trusted, and am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, or as it may be read, that thing wherewith I have intrusted him. What was that !Depositum or Pledge wherewith he had entrusted Christ?*

I Answer, His Soul that it might be saved unto everlasting Life. Every Believer knows two things.

1. THE Person of Christ in the promise in whom he trusts.

2. THE Power and faithfulness of Christ with whom he entrusts his Soul. When he cannot say, I am assured he will save me, yet he can say, I am persuaded he is able to do it. When he cannot act *Assurance* which brings *Joy*, he can act *Reliance* on Christ which brings *Rest*. He can cast his Soul on the Power of Christ, and then *Quiets* himself in this, that altho' his Soul be as a broken *bruised and shaken Reed*, yet he has a firm and strong *Reck* under him. To take hold of the strength of Christ is to trust him with our Souls, and every Sinner that dos this must be sensible of four things.

1. THAT the Law Condemns him for his Sin, and that he cannot acquit himself from the Righteous Sentence which it passes upon him.

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2. THAT

2. THAT the Justice of GOD is offended, and that it is Impossible for him by any thing that he can do or suffer to Satisfie it.

3. THAT his own Personal Qualifications and Duties, (no more than his Sins) can be his justifying Righteousness in *foro Dei*, either in the whole or in any part of it, and by way of *Subordination*.

4. THAT it is Christ only that can answer all the Demands of the Law, and give Satisfaction to the offended Justice of GOD for him.

WHEN a Sinner is sensible of the wrong which he has done to the Holiness of GOD, when he is convinced of his own utter inability either to *repair* the Injury which he has done to GOD, or to prevent the Punishment which he has merited, and when he beholds a *fulnes* and *sufficiency* of Grace, Righteousness and Strength in Christ, to deliver him from the Evil of Infinite and Eternal Punishment, and to procure for him the Favour of GOD, he then throws off all Confidence

dence in the Devices wherewith he did formerly underprop himself, and he takes hold of Christ and his Righteousness.

WHEN a drowning Man finds no bottom under him, and is carried down by the force of a swift Current, if a Rope be thrown to him he takes hold of it, and having nothing else left for his Support he lays his whole weight on it. This may serve to explain to us what it is for a Sinner to take hold of the Strength of Christ. When a Sinner Apprehends himself to be under the Wrath of GOD for his Transgressions, and to be without all strength, either to fulfil the Law, or to bear the Punishment which he has deserved by his Sin, he then takes hold of Christ, and *Reposes* himself on him alone, who can bear him up, and can afford him a Shelter and hiding Place from the fiery Indignation of a powerful offended GOD.

3. I shall shew how we are said to make our Peace with GOD when we take hold of his Strength. There is a Peace of Reconciliation or *Peace*

with God, and there is a Peace of Conscience. We must distinguish the one from the other, as we do the Cause from the Effects. It is of a Peace of Reconciliation, or Peace with GOD that I now speak, and which a Sinner has when he takes hold of Christ. To make our Peace with GOD, is to pass into a State of Peace, and of Enemies to be made the Friends of GOD. It is to have our *Warfare* or Unnatural Rebellion against GOD accomplished, and our Sins forgiven. *Isa. 40. 2.* We must consider this Peace Three ways.

1. IN the Spring-head of it, or in the Eternal Purpose of GOD and his federal Transactions with Christ as a Surety. *The counsel of Peace was between them both. Zech. 6. 13.* Between whom was the Counsel of Peace? I Answer,

1. NOT between *Joshua* the High Priest and *Zerubbabel* the Prince, as *Rabbi Kimchi* say's.

2. NOT between *Joshua* the Type and *Jesus* the Antitype, as *Sanctius* holds.

NOT

3. NOT between the Kingly and Priestly Office of Christ as several Affirm.

Between whom then? I Answer. Between the Person of GOD the Father and the Person of GOD the Son, who in the foregoing *verse*, is called the *Branch*. Counsel is fitly and properly predicated of Persons but not of Offices. There was not only a Decretive Purpose in GOD from Eternity about the Peace of Reconciliation, but there was a Counsel between him and Christ about it, which was productive of a *Covenant of Peace*. *Isa.* 54. 10. In this Covenant Terms and Conditions were proposed by the Father, and were accepted by the Son, whereby all things which belong to our Peace were made sure, and were not left at uncertainties. It is upon the account of this Covenant, that *Grace* is said to be *given us before the World began*. *2 Tim.* 1. 9. It was given to Christ our federal Representative before the World began, and it is given to us thro' Christ in Time and by Degrees.

2. WE must consider this Peace in the compleat purchase of it, which

was when Christ suffered upon the Cross, *Ephes. 2. 13, 14.* When Christ died upon the Cross, he made a perfect Satisfaction for Sin, and thereby purchased Peace.

3. WE must consider this Peace in the Application of it, which is the *Spirit's* Work. It was established in the Counsel of Peace from Eternity, and there was a compleat Purchase made of it when Christ suffered upon the Cross: But it is applied by the Spirit in Time when he touch's our Hearts and quickens us to believe in Christ. As GOD the Fathers Work was to form a Peace of Reconciliation, not only in his Decree, but in his federal Transaction with his Son, and as GOD the Son's Work was to purchase Peace: So GOD the Holy Ghost has a real distinct Work from them both, which is to apply the Peace of Reconciliation, or to bring a Sinner upon believing into a State of Peace. In this Work of the Spirit, there is not only a Declaration of what was antecedently done by GOD the Father, and what was compleated by Christ on the Cross: But there is a real Work of the Spirit in the Application

plication of that to a Man, which he had not while he was in his unbelieving and unconverted State. The Work of the Spirit is to convey to Elect Persons what they had not formally and actually before he applied it to them. 1 Cor. 6. 11. *Such were some of you, but ye are washed.* There was a time when they were in their Filth and were not *washed*. This was before the *Application* of Justifying, and the *Infusion* of sanctifying Grace. GOD had *thoughts* of Peace towards Elect Persons before the World began, and Christ did purchase Peace for them: But they are not actually in a *State of Peace* till the Spirit brings them to take hold of Christ. The Peace of Reconciliation, or Peace with GOD, doth not in the least depend upon Faith, as it is a *Grace, Act or Work* of ours: but the Spirit in the Application of it to adult Persons, works Faith in them, to receive and take hold of Christ who is the only Peace maker. The Application of this Peace of Reconciliation is that which every one has who takes hold of Christ: But all have not the sense of it to whom it is applied. They are all at Peace with
GOD

GOD: But they have not all Peace of Conscience. To have Peace with **GOD** is to be actually justified before him: But for a Believer to have Peace of Conscience, is when his Soul from a sensible Application of Christs Blood, is quieted and comforted in the Fruition or Expectation of that which is universally Eternally and superlatively Good.

4. I shall make *Application* of the Doctrinal Truth.

1. IF it be so, that we must take hold of the Strength of **GOD** if we would make Peace with him, then this may shew us the Misery of the State wherein we are by Nature. We are not only broken off from **GOD** till we be reunited to him, but we are at Variance and Discord with him till we make our Peace with him. We are far from **GOD**, and if we continue in a State of Distance and Separation from him, we must perish unavoidably. *Psal. 73. 27. Lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.* They shall perish when there will be none to deliver them. Again, We are Enemies

mies to GOD by wicked Works. Col. 1. 20. If we retain our Enmity, GOD will deal with us as he doth with his Adversaries, and he will reward us as Evil-doers. Again, We are under the Wrath of GOD. Job. 3. 36. *He that believes not on the Son shall not see life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* If this Wrath that hangs over our Heads as a thick Cloud when we are out of Christ, break and fall down upon us, what will then our Portion and Heritage be? Our State is most miserable so long as we do not take hold of the Strength of GOD, and shall any of us go away and not be deeply affected with it? How great must our Poverty be, when we are divided and cut off from the chiefest Good? How dangerous must our Condition be, when we have GOD for our Enemy and are pursued by his Vengeance? Can we Satisfie our selves in a State of Separation from the Fountain of Life? Can we lift up our Heads with Confidence when GOD is drawing forth and whetting his glittering Sword against us? Can we live without Fear and Trouble, and sleep securely, when e-
very

very Moment we may make our Beds in Hell?

2. IF it be so, that Sinners are in a State of Enmity against GOD, and can have no Peace with him when they do not take hold of Christ, then all such of you as have not taken hold of the Strength of GOD, ought no longer to defer the doing of it. If you will not have GOD to be your best Friend, you shall find him to be your worst Enemy. If you have hitherto lived under the Ministry of the Word without seeking after Peace with GOD, you have then reason to make the severest Reflections on your own Madnes and Folly. If we Ministers that beseech you in *Christ's Name to be reconciled*, find a Grave for our Frail, Mortal Bodies, before you find a Redeemer for your sinful, perishing Souls, what Treasures of Wrath will then be laid up in Store for you? If the *Bellows be burnt*, if the *lead be consumed of the fire*, and if the *Founder melt in Vain*, God will reject you as reprobate Silver. Jer. 6. 29, 30. If the *Harvest be past* and if the *Summer be ended*, and your Souls
not

not be gathered to Christ, how will you then abide the day of his coming? What will ye do and whither will ye go for help, when he that can be your only helper will be your destroyer? How great will your distress be, when the Heaven will reveal your iniquity, the Earth will rise up against you, and when you endeavour to flee from the Iron Weapon, the invenomed Arrows of the Almighty will stick fast in you?

OH, Sinners! think now of taking hold of Christ, and Lament and Mourn that ye have not sooner be-thought your selves in so weighty and necessary a Business. When GOD has given Christ to be your Strength, Pray to him to give you Faith that ye may take hold of him, and may put your Souls into his Hands. Be quick in your flight to Christ, break thro' all Impediments that lie in your way, and rest no where till ye come unto him. Be not diverted by the Charms of Sin and the distracting Cares of the World, but resolve, and that speedily, to venture your Souls on Christ, and then ye have GOD's Word to assure you
against

against all the unbelieving Objections of your own Hearts that ye shall make Peace with him.

3. IF it be so, that there is Peace with GOD for them who take hold of the Strength of Christ, then this may be applied to Believers who have taken hold of Christ.

1. TAKE a faster hold of him. Where true Faith in Christ is begun it comes to him for more encrease of it self. *Luke 17. 5. Lord (said the Disciples to Christ) increase our Faith.* If we have trusted in Christ, let us then *wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he will strengthen our Hearts.* *Psal. 27. 14.* When we have taken hold of Christ by Faith we must get our Faith strengthened and increased, that when we have Peace with GOD we may also have Peace in our own Consciences.

2. WALK worthy of your Privilege. Be intreated by the Mercies of Christ to walk Worthy of him who has called you out of Darkness into his marvellous Light, and has brought
you

you out of a state of Condemnation into a State of Reconciliation. This is that which the Love of Christ will constrain you to do, if ye have made your Peace with GOD by taking hold of his Strength. The greater Favour is bestowed on you the more Service is required from you, and the stricter Account ye have to give. Men and Brethren, let not the Morality of an *Heathen* out-strip your Conversation under the fair shew of a glittering Profession of the Gospel, and let not the faithful-dealing of a *Mahometan* shame all your high Pretences of Religion. Let the near Relation which you bear to GOD as his Children and Friends. Banish every unclean Spirit from you, and let it be a Shield of Defence against all Unchristian and *sordid* Practices. When Men can speak great and good Words to Express and set forth the glorious Mystery of Free Grace, and yet let the *Devil* of *Licentiousness* Reign in their Lives, they then bear false Witness against the highest Truth, they give Christ the deepest Wounds under a Profession of being his greatest Friends, and they harden a *leaven'd* Generation of blind *Legals* in all their Blasphemous Charges where-

wherewith they load the *precious* Doctrine of the Gospel. Will not GOD say to such Men, what have you to do to take my Gospel into your Mouths? Will he not set their Sins in order before them? will he not be swift to Punish them?

3. BE thankful for your Priviledge. It was a poor Contentment to a dying Philosopher, when he thanked his false Deity's, because he was a *Grecian* and not a *Barbarian*, and not only a *Grecian*, but an *Athenian* among the *Grecians*, and a Philosopher among the *Athenians*. If you have taken hold of Christ ye have then the highest Priviledges wherein ye may rejoice. Ye are Christians and not Infidels, true Believers and not Hereticks, Members of Christ, and not Aliens, Friends of GOD and not Enemies, Heirs of Heaven and not Out-casts and Orphans. Revolve in your Thoughts what your Peace with GOD is.

1. IT is a Peace that will bring all good to you. *Job 22. 21. Acquaint now thy self with him and be at Peace, thereby good shall come unto thee.* When
GOD

GOD is a GOD of Peace, he will then be the GOD of all Grace to you. When GOD who is the chiefest Good is at Peace with you, what good thing can you then be without? When you are at Peace with GOD, you may then believe and hope for all things.

2. IT is a Peace that can never be broken. The federal Transactions of GOD the Father about this Peace, and Christs compleat Purchase of it, render the Fraction and Dissolution of it impossible.

3. IT is a Peace that will run along with Eternity. It will be as a *river*. *Isa.* 48. 18. It will be like a *river* that is fed with a living Spring, and is always running. Death is so far from destroying this Peace, that it only rids a Believer of the Troubles of this World, and brings him to enjoy Peace of Reconciliation with GOD in all the glorious Fruits of it.

FINIS.